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FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2004
INFO RUCNASE/ASEAN MEMBER COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 2543
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 2686
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 0524
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 0830
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL PRIORITY 1717
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 2598
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1086
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY

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FOR EAP/MLS AND EAP/MTS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/20/2018

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [MY](#)

SUBJECT: MALAYSIA RECEIVES DEMARCHE ON BURMA CRACKDOWN

REF: STATE 121418

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR MARK D. CLARK, REASON 1.4 (B AND D).

11. (C) Polcouns and visiting Senate Foreign Relations Committee professional staff member Paul Grove called on Malaysian Foreign Ministry Principal Assistant Secretary (Southeast Asia) Ismail Haji Salam and Assistant Secretary Firdauz Othman on November 19 and raised serious concerns over the Burmese junta's recent crackdown. The Malaysian officials represented the geographic office in the Ministry responsible for Burma. Grove, who had just visited Burma, provided compelling first-hand accounts of the terrible humanitarian and political conditions in Burma today. Polcouns and Staffdel presented refTel points, and emphasized that continued lack of good governance in Burma has real costs for neighboring countries, including Malaysia, stemming from refugee flows, crime and health concerns. Polcouns urged Malaysia to send a message to Burma through its UN votes this week on the Burma resolution and the no-action motion. Polcouns and Staffdel also highlighted the upcoming ASEAN summit as an opportunity for Malaysia to support regional pressure on the Burmese regime.

12. (C) Ismail responded that Malaysia continued to work with Singapore and Indonesia to push for positive change in Burma. Malaysia's efforts, however, were tied to "ASEAN ways" and also reflected that ASEAN members had "different levels of democracy." Ismail stated that Burma was "playing different sides against each other," noting China in particular. He explained that the EU, Australia and New Zealand recently had lobbied Malaysia on the Burma issue. The Foreign Ministry had advised the EU to adopt a "people approach" with post-cyclone assistance that in part would demonstrate that such aid did not flow from the Burmese regime. In this regard, Malaysia had supported Mercy Malaysia, an NGO, to establish five or six small hospitals. Malaysia thought that Burma could change through "some transitional period" featuring the gradual exit of the military from politics. Polcouns responded that there was no evidence of any positive trend, and instead recent arrests represented a regression. Ismail said Foreign Minister Rais Yatim was engaged in discussions on how to approach Burma in the coming ASEAN summit, but offered no details. Ismail pledged to share U.S. views with his superiors.

13. (U) Staffdel Grove did not have an opportunity to review this message.
KEITH